

Research Team of Stickel and Stickel Depart Patuxent

Former Director of World-Renowned Center for Wildlife Research Retires

On March 12, Dr. Lucille Stickel packed up her books and everything in her office at the Patuxent Wildlife Research Center, including her collection of telephone line insulators, then she and her husband, W.H. "Bill" Stickel, went into well-earned and well-deserved retirement.

What she leaves behind is an unmatched record of achievement, not the least of which was her directorship of the famed Patuxent Center. She was the first woman to direct a major Federal laboratory, first to achieve supergrade Civil Service status in the Fish and Wildlife Service, and one of the first researchers to delve into the effects of pollutants on wildlife. In fact, her 1946 publication, "Field Studies Of A *Peromyscus* (mouse) Population In An Area Treated With DDT," sounded the first warning of the environmental dangers involved with the use of this pesticide.

Though Stickel is best known for her pioneering investigations into environmental pollution, she completed numerous other research programs covering a wide variety of subjects. Extremely important among these were her papers on small mammal populations. Not only have her findings contributed greatly to the field of mammalogy, but the innovations and techniques she pioneered have since come into common use by biologists everywhere. She was, for instance, among the first to use the bones found in owl regurgitations for identifying small, nocturnal prey animals.

Since Stickel spent her entire career at Patuxent, some of her papers are the result of decades of continuous study at the center. In 1978, she published a study of changes in a population of box turtles that spanned three decades.

Recently, she reflected on the changes that she's witnessed during her career, saying, "Organochlorines are being phased out, and that's a step forward. The trouble is we can't keep up with the new compounds designed to replace them. But the thing that makes me optimistic about it, compared to my former days, is that now there are a lot of people that care, both in industry and out. A lot of people want to know what this-and-such compound will do to wildlife and wildlife habitat.

"I don't think these people would

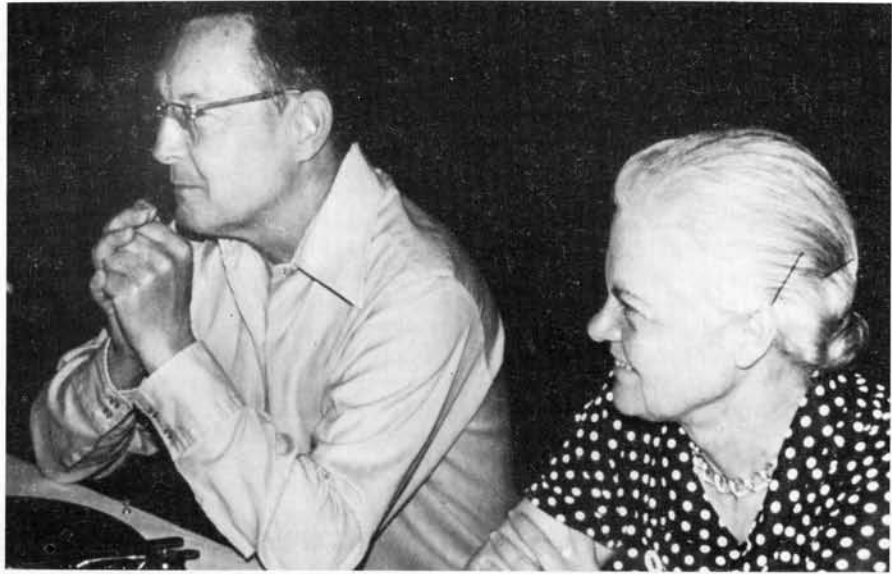


photo by Don Clark

Drs. William and Lucille Stickel, whose pioneering research at the Patuxent Wildlife Research Center help develop the facility's reputation as a world leader in wildlife conservation, have left the Service to retire to North Carolina.

tolerate the situation that existed with DDT for so long. In those times, people would argue that it wasn't so and you'd have to work, and work, and work, and repeat your experiments again and again to demonstrate what was happening. The world has changed in its concern for environmental issues, and I think that is encouraging. We *ought* to be encouraged because now research involving the environment is taken seriously."

A Michigan native, Stickel received her B.A. from Eastern Michigan University, and her master's and doctorate, both in zoology, from the University of Michigan. Her many citations

have included Interior's distinguished service award, The Wildlife Society's Aldo Leopold Award, and the Federal Women's award.

She married classmate Bill Stickel and came with him to his first job at the center. When he was called into military service in World War II, she took his place as a research biologist. Thirty years later, both had achieved prominence in wildlife research, and she had become Patuxent's director.

The Stickels will live in the mountains of North Carolina near Franklin.

—Frank Kenney
Office of Current Information